

It is not God's wish that anyone perish. Rather it is God's wish that all come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. "If while we were enemies we were reconciled (restored) to God by the death of His Son much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life (Romans 5: 10)." The question is: **are you reconciled to God?**

I have always understood that the prefix *re-* means again. If we are to be *re-conciled* (*re-stored*) to God, the question is: Why? The answer would be: because we were separated from God. Then a follow up question would be: What separated us from God? Very succinctly I would answer: Our sins! Better still, allow the LORD to answer for Himself: **It is your sins that have cut you off from God** (Isaiah 59:2). Now God is saying: **Be reconciled to God.**

The New Testament makes the appeal thus: "*The time of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent,*

because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed, and of this He has given assurance to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:30). These are the words of Paul – Saul of Tarsus – a Jewish convert who saw the light (pun intended!).

A question begs: If there must be re- conciliation to God, was there ever a time of perfection before the wall of sin crept up? The answer can only be: Yes! right at the beginning, before the fall of man at Eden. Now *all* must be re- conciled to God, and Jesus is the mediator, appointed by God Himself. No one comes to the Father but by Me, Jesus said. Paul reiterated, in his letter to Timothy, "*There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*" (1Timothy 2:5).

There is a movement that seeks to convince men that we can get along just fine without God and His Christ – it is all very humanistic and widely promoted by many so-called motivational

speakers. Alas for their humanistic efforts, they make no provision for relationship with our Maker who wants to commune with us right here while we live and breathe on planet earth. There is a fallacy that everyone who dies automatically graduates to heaven. Citizenship in Heaven begins right here in the land of the living. I cannot find Biblical evidence that we all go to heaven when we die. The Bible is the Owner's Manual and can be seen as a huge invitation to spend eternity with Almighty God, and the map to direct us there.

Jesus was rejected by the Jews who sought to kill Him and eventually had Him killed, because they thought He was a blasphemous upstart in spite of all the signs and wonders performed right in their midst. Jesus held the Jews responsible for not recognising Him and in that same way He will hold us personally responsible for not receiving Him, our only hope of glory. *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,"* Jesus lamented, *"killing the prophets*

and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate” (Matthew 23:37, 38.) It was God’s plan that the Lamb that was slain at the foundation of the world be crucified: firstly, because without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:22), and secondly because the curse of the Law would be repealed by His crucifixion. Calvary was a glorious accomplishment; it not a tragedy. Galatians 3:13 says, *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, “Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree” (a clause from the law, Deuteronomy 21:23)*

The prophets had spoken of the coming One. His coming and His ministry all testified to prophecy unfolding before their very eyes, but the religious leaders rejected their Messiah. It was mandatory

that the scriptures be known but they served God with their rote-recited words and their hearts were far from Him. The prophecies concerning the expected Messiah went right over their heads even though the scriptures are clear. When Jesus said one Sabbath in the synagogue when He read from Isaiah, *Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*, they became enraged. By the grace of God Jesus escaped their murderous intentions.

After his conversion Saul of Tarsus saw Jesus in the scriptures as clearly as he saw the natural sights around him! Religion had been sloughed and relationship with the living Lord instituted instead. His hard heart became a heart of flesh. His seared conscience came alive. Saul suffered greatly for the name of the Lord but he knew what he knew and could not stop preaching the gospel any more than he could stop breathing!

We are in the Church Age, whether we like it or not; whether we accept it or reject it; whether

we believe it or not. Ultimately we will face our creator and give account of what we did about being saved from His promised wrath when He provided all we need to be safe in Jesus Christ. The Church of God was born on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles there, and will end when Jesus comes to take His church prior to the onset of the Great Tribulation. And all this is made clear in the Bible so that we have no foot to stand on if and when we decide to deny knowing the FACTS. Paul differentiates between three groups: the Jews (the Israel of God), the Church of God and Gentiles. It is the Gentile group especially, that needs to become reconciled to God. Dear Reader, if you are not a member of the Church of God, are not a Jew, then you are a New Testament Gentile. And if a Gentile, then the plans for your ultimate end are not pleasant. It is God's expressed desire that none perish – not one!

I believe that when God releases the spirit to dwell in a human being, at conception, it leaves heaven in a state of perfection. I believe that God puts Himself on the line here because there is the very real possibility that He knows exactly which spirits will not be returning to heaven. It grieves Him because He wants all to be saved from His wrath which *will* come when the time is right.

When Jesus hung on that cross, God was in Him, reconciling the world to Himself. God's desire is for the whole world to be reconciled to Him and not just certain individuals or nationalities. He did once upon a time set aside a people for Himself, but His ultimate plan was to save the world! And when the time was right, He sent His Son to complete the job: **"For God loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life"** (John 3:16). I sincerely hope, dear Reader

that I am stirring in you a desire to draw close to this God who is pure love and in whom there is no guile at all and possibly whetting your appetite for the Word of God. Hopefully you are being motivated to search out the Scriptures for yourself. It is God's expressed desire that we actually examine the scriptures for ourselves (Acts 17:11). We all need to make an informed decision about our eternity, and God has given His Word concerning that and so much more.

Never forget: God sent His Son into the world **not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him** (John 3:17). Jesus is the conduit, channel, mouth piece, means of expression, agent, medium, intermediary (get it?) God has employed through whom He can reach us and us Him. Apart from Him there is no other means of reaching God. My own testimony confirms that truth for me. Now that I am born again I *know* that once I was spiritually blind and I *know* that I am no longer a spiritual ignoramus.

I am also aware of the responsibility that knowledge places upon me. It is like a fire in my bones... I cannot keep quiet about knowing the way to heaven... the real God-provided way. I know how Jeremiah felt when he cried out, "There is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot" (20:9). I found something precious and I cannot keep silent about it. Jesus called Himself the Door (or the Gate) in John 10: 7 & 9. We enter through Him and Him alone. Any other door or gateway alleged to be the way to salvation and to a rich and satisfying life is the way of The Thief who is out to steal, kill and destroy (my paraphrase of John 10:10a)!

Having dealt with sin once and for all at Calvary, God sees us as being sin-free. Think about that. This is quite a statement, and it is completely true. However there is a condition. God sees us as sin-free 'in Christ'. We need to accept the

Saviour He provided, so that in Him we can be the **righteousness of God**. Choosing to worship an idol disqualifies us for God's blessing of the forgiveness of sin. Idolatry is a contravention of the first commandment: **You shall have no other God but me**. Allow me carte blanche with the words of Paul:

I beseech you, dear Reader, be reconciled to God. For our sake He made the sinless Jesus to be sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. 2Corinthians 5:21

God's heart yearns jealously over the spirit He caused to dwell in us (James 4:5). God wants us to imitate the lifestyle of Jesus, the role model He specially sent to save us from sin and shame. Reconciliation to God turns us into new creatures in Christ, with righteous living our preferred lifestyle. It is a lie that we cannot emulate Jesus...indeed that is the reason God sent Him...

to prove it is possible for a human being to resist sin. Because God knows our weaknesses, He gave us His Holy Spirit to enable us to live the sin free life. Said sin-free life begins with admitting that we are sinners, in need of a Saviour, and that the Saviour provided by Almighty God is Jesus. It consists in receiving Jesus as our own personal Saviour, and living as if we know and believe that our reproach has been rolled away. This is reconciliation to God in Christ. Outside of Christ our sins are a glaring blot that eliminates us from the sight of God. Daily prayer with repentance of sin keeps us clean and closes any door of unconfessed sin we may have opened to the devil who feasts on sin. He sees sin as an invitation to enter into our lives for sin is his domain!

When God saved me my life was in a complete mess! I had nowhere to turn and knew that death was better than what I called living! Then when God restored me and accepted my

repentance, my new life in Christ began immediately! In the early days I was astounded! I could not believe this was still the same old me who had been in such a mess! The world seemed brighter; things smelled better... all in all my senses were sharpened even as my spiritual senses came to life. What a time I had repenting of all my past ignorance that had led me into a hell on earth! It was not a good time but it made me feel clean in a way I cannot explain for I never actually felt dirty before that. I just know that God cleaned me up and has been with me, leading me, guiding me, teaching me and helping me through all of life's difficulties, by His precious Holy Spirit. Even all my mocking and scoffing at Christians became a source of shame for at last I understood! Then I discovered that all born again believers have the same testimony of the horrendous 'before' Christ and the wonderful 'after' Christ picture of life. Strangely enough this realization has nothing to do with morality but has everything to do with not

having given Almighty God His rightful place in our lives. When God is put first, things just work out right... that's just the way it is. Even the ploys of the enemy to hurt us become a source of irritation rather than a source of pain and misery.

In Christ we meet God and establish a relationship with Him. Apart from Christ Jesus we can do nothing (John 15:5). In Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself (2Corinthians 5:19). Pardon my repetitiveness – so much does bear repeating. The highlighted parts of the following portion of Scripture should be written indelibly on every Christian's heart: 2Corinthians 5:16 – 19 "From now on, therefore, we **regard no one from a human point of view**; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard Him thus no longer. **17. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come. 18. All this is from God,**

who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19. that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, *not counting their trespasses against them*, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Christians have a mandate: the message of reconciliation *must go out*. And we have the ministry of reconciliation.

Other reconciliation verses:

1. Colossians 1:19 & 20

19. For God in all His fullness was pleased to live in Christ,

20. and through Him God reconciled everything to Himself.

He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

21. This includes you who were once far away from God. You were His enemies, separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions.

22. Yet now He has reconciled you to Himself through the death of Christ in His physical body. As a result, He has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault.

2. Ephesians 1:4-8; 2:16

4. Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes.

5. God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do and it gave Him great pleasure.

6. So we praise God for the glorious grace He has poured out on us who belong to His dear Son (*or* in the Beloved).

7. He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins.

8. He has showered His kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

3. Ephesians 2:16 Together as one body, Christ reconciled both (Jews and Gentiles) to God by means of His death on the cross, and our hostility towards each other was put to death.